New Scheme for STs Artisans

1608. SHRI R. SURENDER REDDY: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to take up 1500 blocks for tribal desert and backward areas for an intensive Public Distribution System under which every village of these blocks would have at least 1 fair price shop;

(b) whether this proposal was discussed at the conference of State Secretaries incharge of Scheduled Tribes welfare;

(c) if so, whether the Government are also formulating a new scheme for scheduled tribes artisans; and

(d) if so, the time by which these recommendations will be implemented by the Government and to what extent the village PDS have so far been revamped?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): (a) About 1700 Blocks have been identified by the States/UTs in the Integrated Tribal Development Programmes (ITDP), Desert Development Programmes (DDP), the Dought Prone Area Programme and Certain Designated Hill Areas for special focus for strengthening of the Public Distribution System in these areas.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) There is no specific scheme of P.D.S. meant exolusively for the tribal artisans.

(d) Does not arise.

Employment to Handicapped Persons in Postal and Telecom Departments

1609. SHRI D.D. KHANORIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme for providing employment to handicapped persons on priority basis in the posts and telecommunications departments;

(b) if so, the names of such posts where handicapped persons are appointed; and

(c) the total number of handicapped employees in posts and telecommunications departments in Himachal Pradesh as at present?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) 48.

Buildings for Telephone Exchanges in Kerala

1610. SHRI KODIKKUNNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have any plan for expansion and development of Punalur and Adoor Telephone exchanges;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to construct new buildings for Adoor and Punalur Telephone Exchanges;

(d) if so, the amount proposed to be allocated for construction of above buildings; and

(e) the time by which the work is likely to be started?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes, Please.